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GULF COAST *Gardening*

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You Might Be a Master Gardener If:

You own one too many floppy straw hats... Every year your flower beds grow and your lawn shrinks... You run out of drinking glasses because they are all being used as vases... Your wedding ring spends more time on the ledge above the sink than on your hand... You can't bear to thin seedlings and throw them away... You have been cited for reckless driving on a riding lawn mower... You're in a national park and you have to resist the urge to pull weeds... You leave for work with clean hands, but by the time you reach the car, your nails are grimy... You leave notes on the doors of complete strangers that explain mulch should be put around a tree in a donut, not a volcano... You Grow Something Besides OLD!

Welcome to spring 2017! As Master Gardeners, we all know spring and fall are the best seasons to design, expand and maintain our landscapes. Hopefully you were able to pick up new plants at our February sale. I had a few plants left over from our October sale that I had not gotten in the ground yet. I've had to set a rule for myself that I can't buy new plants until I've found a place for the

ing methods if the old ones are no longer fun. She also gives us ideas on what to plant or prune this season. Jan Brick tells us about the beautiful Asiatic Lilies on page 8. Maybe you were able to pick some up at the February sale?

When they bloom, take photos for our newsletter!

Spring, of course, is so lovely because everything is in bloom. Our Best Shots article this month features trees you might be seeing around town that are in full bloom. I tend to think all roses are beautiful.

If you are like me and haven't gotten your plants in the ground in a timely manner, checkout the article on page 13 to learn the correct way to plant various types of plants that you might have purchased.

Page 17 features an article on Libbie's Place and how our Master Gardeners are working to keep this wonderful garden a beautiful and stimulating place for some of our community of disabled and senior citizens. If you like to get back more than you give



By Camille Goodwin
MG 2008



ones in pots still waiting to be put in a garden! It was a mad dash, but they were all in the ground by sale day!! I'm getting pretty good at planting in the dark.

As this busy growing season begins, the Newsletter Team has put together some educational information in this issue that will help you along the way. Our Q&As this issue cover (1) the classification of plants and the science of naming. You might be a Master Gardener if Latin names actually mean something to you! (page 4), and (2) Early Blight on Tomatoes. Learn about this fungal pathogen and how to control it on page 5.

One of our most challenging garden battles is the unending number of weeds! Two highly invasive weeds are highlighted this month, the Asiatic Hawkbeard (page 6) and the Peppervine (page 7). Arm yourself with the knowledge to rid your landscapes of these two offenders.

An offset to the weed invasion will be the knowledge of spiders as a gardener's biological pest control agent written by Lisa Belcher on page 14.

Donna Ward gives us some ideas for new garden-

from people that are so appreciative of what you do, Libbie's Place is a wonderful spot to volunteer.

Two great recipes are featured in Seasonal Bites this month (page 18). Bourbon is featured in one - so I'm in!!

Checkout the Carbide Park updates in the story on page 22. We also have two Honorary MGs we'd like to recognize this month for their long years of service to our Association (page 23).

We know we are beyond fortunate to have Dr. Johnson as our Horticulture Agent and MG Program Coordinator. Recently he was honored with a Superior Service Award for Distinguished Career by his peers. Read about his commendation in The Last Word on page 27. We know he's the BEST, but are so happy others recognize this as well.

Don't forget to checkout our calendar, bulletin board and volunteer opportunity pages for current updates.

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Cover:
Blooms for the Spring
Photo courtesy MG Robin Stone Collins



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Thanks for your interest!

Q&A ask a master gardener

Common name, botanical name, family, genus, species, cultivar—what is so important about all these different names and what do they mean?



By Pat Forke
MG 1983

All currently known living organisms are classified according to various characteristics into six kingdoms. The plant kingdom, Plantae, is divided into 12 different Phyla. The phylum of Angiospermophyta (flowering plants) includes approximately 270,000 plant species and is subdivided into two classes: Dicotyledoneae

(two-seed leaf plants which include most trees, shrubs, vines and flowers) and Monocotyledoneae (one-leaf plants which include plants that are a primary source of nutrition such as grains and some fruits).

Plants were divided only into phylum, order, and family until the 18th century. Botanist Carl Linnaeus was first to provide a first name called the genus and a second name called a species to plants. This scientific naming of all living organisms is referred to as binomial nomenclature. These names are usually derived from Greek or Latin roots. This use of Latin which is recognized as a universal language of scholars allows a world-wide consistency in the botanical names of plants.

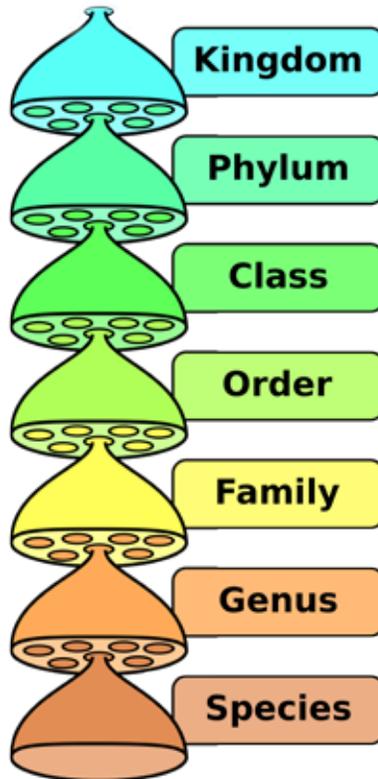
The names we often see associated with plants are the family, genus and species, followed by forms and varieties. This gives each plant not only a unique name but also identifying characteristics and often a history of that plant.

A family name, such as Asteraceae (aster, daisy, or sunflower family), will group similar plants which are then further divided into genera (plural form of genus), such as *Leucanthemum* (white flower). Each genus is then divided by species, such as *vulgare* (meaning common). Thus we have in the family Asteraceae a plant which was named *Leucanthemum vulgare* by Luther Burbank and means a common white flower or more commonly known as ox-eye daisy. In the same family and genus we have the species *L. maximum* which was hybridized with *L. lacustre* by Luther Burbank to produce *Leucanthemum x superbum* or more commonly known as the Shasta daisy. There are many cultivars from this human intervention to the daisy and one of the cultivars would be written:

Leucanthemum x superbum 'Becky.'

From looking at this name, you are able to glean a lot of information. This plant is a member of the aster, daisy, or sunflower family. It is a white flower that has been hybridized (noted by the x) and a cultivar named 'Becky' was developed to "improve" the original plant.

For even more information about a specific plant, you can go to the International Plant Name Index at <http://www.ipni.org/ipni/plantnam>



researchpage.do. This is a database of the associated basic bibliographical details of seed plants, ferns and lycophytes. This site offers interesting information about over one million plants.

Families of plants are broad categories. Genus is a group of species of plants that share certain structural characteristics as determined by botanical study and similar care requirements. The genus name, a noun, may come from mythology, literature, or other sources which refer to something the plant resembles. This is the plant's "surname." After a scientific name is written in full in an article, it is acceptable to abbreviate the genus name by using the first initial followed by a period.

Species is an adjective and often refers to a place, the plant's characteristics or appearance. Species is often abbreviated as sp. (singular) or spp. (plural) and will identify a particular variety of a plant.

A more narrowing of the classification of a plant is defined in the forms or varieties, cultivars, or hybrids. This is listed as a part of the botanical name after the genus and species. A variety is a naturally occurring change, sport or mutation which produces a distinctively different plant in appearance. A cultivar is sometimes abbreviated cv., is in a modern language, and is a variation achieved by human intervention. This

is usually done to improve the variegations, growth form and foliage, or flower color. A hybrid is a new cultivar of plant that is also created through human intervention. The pollen of one plant is crossed with the pistil of another. Continued reproduction may require this same crossing technique as rarely do seed produced from a mature plant created by hybridization reproduce the same desired characteristic.

Now that we better understand what makes up the name of a specific plant, how do we write it?

When the genus and species are written together, the genus is capitalized and written in italics. The species is never capitalized but is also italicized.

A variation (var.), form (f.), or cultivar (cv.) is written following the species, is not capitalized unless it is a proper name which would normally be capitalized, is not italicized and is enclosed in single quotation marks. The proper abbreviation may or may not be used.

Here are more examples:

Ilex vomitoria – *Ilex* means "holly" and *vomitoria* means "to induce vomiting." Yaupon Holly was used by Native Americans to induce vomiting.

Ilex vomitoria 'Nana' – This is a dwarf form of the holly.

Ilex vomitoria 'Will Fleming' – This holly cultivar was discovered by Will Fleming.

Ilex x attenuate 'Sunny Foster' – This cultivar of a hybrid between *I. opaca* and *I. cassine* and produces yellow leaves on new growth.

Q&A ask a master gardener

What's happening to my tomato plants – Early Blight?



By Laurel Stine
MG 1996

My beautiful, tomato plants have been attacked by something which is shriveling the leaves at a rapid rate. What is causing this?

Your tomato plants may have a fungal leaf spot disease known as early blight, which can cause leaf, stem and fruit lesions.

Early blight is caused by the fungus *Alternaria solani*. Leaf spots can start out brownish-black and then expand to show concentric color zones with a yellow halo. Many times the spots will be angular and confined between leaf veins.

and confined between leaf veins.

You may notice that disease typically starts on the lower leaves, which are closest to the soil, which harbors the initial inoculum that starts the disease cycle in the spring. Splashing water, as well as heavy rains, can help spread early blight, so only water the root zone of the plant and avoid wetting the foliage as much as possible. Mulching and staking can also help reduce the splashing effects of rain or irrigation.

Early Blight is an annual problem for most gardeners. It normally develops into a problem when plants have a heavy fruit set and the area has received rainfall. Spores from the fungus are spread to the lower foliage by wind and splashing rain. Leaves must be wet for infection to occur. At 50 degrees F. the leaves must be wet for 12 hours for infection, but at temperatures above 59 degrees F., the length of time for infection is only 3 hours. Leaf spot development is most severe during periods of cloudy days and high humidity.

Once early blight is present, your only option is to slow the rate of disease transmission. Scout your garden regularly and remove infected leaves or severely infected plants because they provide inoculum (spores) for the disease to spread.

Use the following cultural control practices:

- Use only clean seed saved from disease-free plants.
- Remove and destroy crop residue at the end of the season. Where this is not practical, plow residue into the soil to promote breakdown by soil microorganisms and to physically remove the spore source from the soil surface.
- Practice crop rotation to non-susceptible crops (3-year cycle). Be sure to control volunteers and susceptible weeds.
- Promote good air circulation by proper spacing of plants. Orient rows in the direction of prevailing winds, avoid shaded areas, and avoid wind barriers.
- Irrigate early in the day to promote rapid drying of foliage.
- Healthy plants with adequate nutrition are less susceptible to the disease.
- Minimize plant injury and the spread of spores by controlling insect feeding.
- Hand picking diseased foliage may slow the rate of disease spread but should not be relied on for control. Do not work when foliage is wet.
- Use resistant or tolerant varieties.

According to Tom LeRoy, fungicides typically used to help control early blight include chlorothalonil, fixed copper, mancozeb, and maneb and should be applied on a 7- to 10-day spray schedule. It is important when using fungicides to adhere to all label directions. A possible organic control product would be Serenade. Serenade™ biofungicide is a wettable powder formulation of *Bacillus subtilis*, QST-713 strain. *B. subtilis* is applied as a preventative fungicide and works as an antagonist against many pathogens.



Tomato Early Blight Stem Lesions
Virginia Tech



Tomato Early Blight Fruit Lesions
Florida Extension



Tomato Early Blight Angular Lesions with Concentric Rings
Virginia Tech

Asiatic Hawksbeard



By Rachel
Montemeyor
MG 2011

Can you identify a weed that has small clusters of lemon-yellow flowers with multiple petals and with no leaves on a two foot tall stem?

Asiatic Hawksbeard weed is from the Asteraceae family. It is a non-native herbaceous annual, develops a short tap root, and is erect and slender up to two feet tall. The multiple branches of the Asiatic Hawksbeard rise from a basal rosette. Flowering stalks usually branch in the uppermost part of the plant. Flowers are smaller than the common dandelion.

Flowers are about ½ inch wide, yellow to orange-yellow with five tiny teeth at the end of the outermost petals. More flowering occurs in fall and spring. The leaves may appear similar to dandelion leaves, but they are spatulate, long and narrow at the base with a broader rounded apex. There are few or no leaves on the stems and the edges are slightly lobed.

Asiatic Hawksbeard is predominately found in flower beds, but will also grow well in other sites such as turf grass, potted plants, cultivated fields, and road sites. It is typically found in non-wetlands in well-drained soils but can also be a problem on poorly drained soils.

This weed grows from Pennsylvania to Florida, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Texas. It also grows in Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Hawaii and the West Indies. It is native to Japan and South East Asia. This invasive weed is now found around the world. It is also known as *Crepis japonica* and Japanese Hawkweed.

Asiatic Hawksbeard usually survives most winters and blooms year-round in our growing area. Reproduction is by seed. If you can pull the weed before it produces a flower and keep it from reproducing, you will then have a better chance of keeping it in control. You can also keep the yard mowed or use a weed eater or a hoe to keep the weed from spreading. A properly maintained landscape that is not stressed by disease, insects, or is not nutritionally imbalanced will go a long way in keeping weeds at bay.

Scientific Names

Youngia japonica

Family: Asteraceae

Group: Dicot

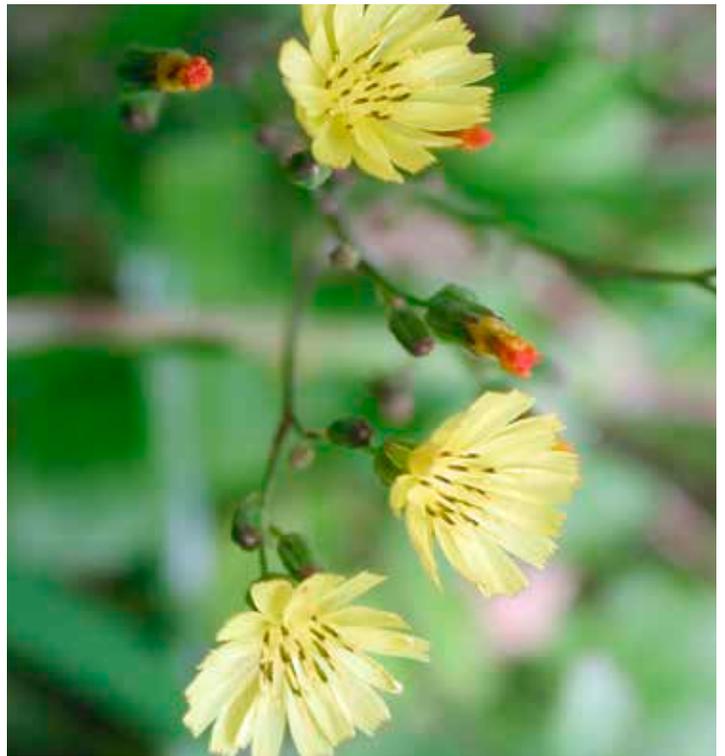
Season: Cool Season

Other Common Names

Japanese Hawkweed

Oriental False Hawksbeard

Photos courtesy of GCMG



Peppervine

A highly invasive weed



By Marian
Kimbrough
MG 2007

Peppervine (*Ampelopsis arborea*) is native in the regions of Northeast Asia such as China, Korea, Japan, and the Russian Far East. It was introduced to the United States in the early 1800s and, at that time, was a much-desired bedding plant because it could be used as a bush if kept trimmed, or could be trellis trained for a beautiful, showy display of color from 15 to 30+ feet in height.

The desirable characteristics of its colorful berries, good ground coverage, trellis climbing ability, pest resistance and tolerance of adverse weather conditions are the same characteristics which make it extremely undesirable in the United States as an invader, today. It will quickly overtake “gardens” and kill out any desirable smaller plants that happen to be in its path. In the wild, as peppervine spreads, it can kill out native plants, which is detrimental to a natural habitat environment.

Peppervine produces an abundance of colorful berries, with each berry containing two-to-four seeds. The fruit is attractive food for birds and large mammals as a minor food, and for smaller mammals as a food lower on their choice of items. Wherever the feasting birds and mammals go, peppervine seeds go, too—the seeds are dispersed in their droppings, increasing the spread of this highly invasive plant.

This vine is often mistaken for poison ivy—make that commonly mistaken. Laurel Stine (MG 2002) stated that we get numerous submissions each year of peppervine from residents thinking they have poison ivy. The specific characteristics of this plant are a deciduous woody stalk and vine, with non adhesive tendrils that occur opposite and closely resemble native grapes. Newly emerged leaves are purple-red and change to a light green-to-dark green as they reach mature size. (Figure 3)

Peppervine has inconspicuous greenish white flowers opposite the leaves from June through August, and the berries appear from September into late fall. As a cluster of berries mature, their coloration gradually changes from green to white (Figure 1) to red to shiny blue-black (Figure 2). Berries on a given cluster mature at different rates; thus, clusters will typically consist of differently colored berries.

Management options of the peppervine plant must be both consistent and persistent over two-or-more years for whichever management approach is utilized. The best management option for most gardeners is hand pulling, especially during the spring season to prevent peppervines from flowering and producing seeds. However, since it has a very deep tap root, often, an older more developed plant stalk

should be cut near the ground, then treating the remaining stalk with a broadleaf herbicide. Some broadleaf herbicides which have proven successful are those with triclopyr as an active ingredient (e.g., Brush B Gon and Brush Killer) and glyphosate (i.e., Roundup and Eraser). For foliar application, the use of triclopyr formulations are effective.

It is advisable to check with your local County Extension Office if you are unsure whether you are dealing with peppervine or poison ivy as neither is desirable! Be sure to take proper precautions when preparing to control the spread of plants/weeds by the use of chemical methods—Happy Weeding!

Scientific Names

Ampelopsis arborea

Family: Vitaceae

Group: Dicot

Other Common Names

Buckvine

Cow Itch

Photos courtesy of MG's Herman
Auer and Margie Jenke



The Lovely Lily!



By Jan Brick
MG 2001

"But each spring... a gardening instinct, sure as sap rising in the trees, stirs within us. We look about and decide to tame another little bit of ground." -- Lewis Gantt

That gardening instinct is now stirring in gardeners all over the area. As the weather improves, temperatures rise, a greening of our little spaces has begun. Why not consider taming a little bit of ground with a patch of lilies. Asiatic lilies, Easter lilies and Oriental lilies can thrive and explode with almost every color of the rainbow in our agricultural zone nine. Oriental and the trumpet lilies are delightfully aromatic and by selecting differing varieties and staggering the planting intervals, the blooming season can be extended from early summer into fall.

The lily symbolizes innocence, dates to the Egyptian empire, and as Egyptians were among the first known users of cosmetics, lily extracts were included in their blends of oils and ointments. The essential oil of the lily flower is an important ingredient in the production of perfumes and they are widely employed today in aromatherapy treatments of depression, said to create "feelings of happiness and a sense of security."

The lily continued to be revered through medieval times and into the Victorian era. They were labeled "majestic" for their lovely shape and association with the Virgin Mary. Young women of the era often wore lilies pinned in their hair or to evening wear and posing with bouquets or a single bloom was popular in photographs.

By far the most well-known variety is the Easter lily, a favorite at this time of year as a time-honored custom. Once it has finished the bloom cycle as a specimen plant in your home, the Easter lily may be planted in your yard and will bring additional joy when it re-blooms the following year. *Lilium longiflorum* is the Latin name for the Easter lily which is native to southern Japan. Thought of as a symbol of resurrection, the Easter lily rises from rough bulbs to "bloom into majestic flowers that embody beauty, grace and tranquility." The cultivar best known is called "Nellie White" so named by a grower in honor of his spouse; it is readily recognizable by its large trumpet shaped blooms.

Prior to World War II, most Easter lily bulbs were imported from Japan. Ninety-five percent of these bulbs are produced now along a coastal region bordering California and Oregon for today's marketplace. Well over twelve million bulbs are harvested, packed and shipped in the fall to commercial greenhouses where the bulbs are forced to bloom early for Easter sale.

For maximum brilliance in your garden, consider the regal splendor of the Oriental hybrids. They grow well along coastal areas where the soil is generally acidic and rich. At the rear of the border, these tall varieties will provide an "airy elegance" throughout the extensive hot summer months. With their lengthy vase life, these blooms make excellent gifts for friends and family. They are charmingly sweet-scented during the daylight hours but in the evening they are especially aromatic. Oriental hybrids enjoy a prolonged life in the garden and will multiply over the years. These hybrids prefer full sun on their faces but shade at their feet...planting perennials around them is helpful. Stake the taller specimen along the stalks for support if needed.

The Stargazer is among the elite of the Oriental hybrids, admired for its blossoms that can measure ten inches across and nearly three feet tall with waxy backward curling freckled petals. The scent that emanates from this exquisite bloom has been described as heady, pungent and intoxicating.

Other Oriental cultivars to consider are the "Casa Blanca" a true standout with huge gleaming white flowers and sweet perfume, called "astonishing" and "ravishing" and "La Reve," a soft pure pink with a splash of red freckles... This hybrid is an indisputable beauty!

Asiatic hybrids offer early flowering and hardiness for your garden with a broad range of intense color. "Connecticut King" is a large, compelling and impressive buttercup yellow with a golden yellow center but without the typical spots. A showy bloom that has good cutting potential...low maintenance...full sun to part shade. The cultivar known as "Enchantment" is an extremely vigorous growing lily with deep orange blooms that feature black spots in an attractive array inside the bloom...easy to grow...multiplies quickly...very showy.

Besides, these more familiar hybrids, adventurous gardeners might contemplate experimenting with several other less well-known varieties.

Calla Lily: clear strong colors...three to five weeks bloom in the garden... contemporary sculptural appearance...two week vase life...perennial in zone nine...full sun to part shade

Tiger Lily: usually orange but also show in white, yellow or red...old-fashioned charm...hardy...Turk's Cap form

Regal Lily: yellow throat with a blush of pink...grows four to six feet tall... resembles the form of the Easter Lilly

Plant your bulbs in full sun, in well-draining soil (amend the soil with compost or sand to improve the drainage). Dig the holes and set the bulbs four inches apart and four inches deep. Lilies are tall and narrow so plant in clusters of six or seven for more impact. Remember the pointed end goes up. Water generously taking care to settle the soil well around the bulb. Cutting the blooms for arrangements when in bloom will not harm the plants but adding a little extra fertilizer later will help to provide energy and vitality for next season. Remove the spent blooms but do not cut off the stalk as it provides the bulb with nutrients through photosynthesis; continue to water in your regular garden routine. Supplement with water-soluble fertilizer in the fall to promote new roots, larger blooms and dynamic growth. The foliage may be cut back and removed once it turns yellow in color signaling the onset of the dormancy period. Bulbs prefer dry conditions while dormant.

Pots, tubs and containers can become a striking and charming statement with a delightful assortment of lilies and complimentary low growing oxalis or flowing potato vine, as a partner. Fill your container with a good commercial potting soil taking care to provide adequate drainage holes; the bulbs will rot in waterlogged soil; and set the containers in full sun.

Lilies have been treasured for over three thousand years, gracing gardens in countless regions around the world...enchanted hunters and gatherers as they traveled. By experimenting with various types of lilies, we can take pride in the knowledge that we are continuing a tradition that extends back to nearly 1000 B.C.



Suggested Health Benefits

The lily flower has been utilized in herbal remedies for the treatment of leprosy, conjunctivitis, strokes and angina; there are advocates of its use in the regulation of the heartbeat, stating that the heart will function more efficiently and regularly.

Herbal antidotes include a therapy for constipation or water retention; it has been reported that an ointment created of a mixture of lily roots and flowers may be useful for treating spider bites, burns, open sores or wounds and the prevention of scar tissue.

Purportedly, in some areas of the world, a tea of the root lily variety has been consumed for relief of coughs, fevers, and stomach disorders as well as ulcers and inflammations of unknown origin.

One should assume that with such a wide ranging list of advantages in the use of the lily as a cure for any of the above medical challenges, the consultation of a medical health professional would be necessary. Do not attempt a self-conceived therapy of your own!

Note

Like many garden plants, a broad range of lilies can be considered poisonous and may produce negative reactions in both pets and humans.

The sap may cause skin irritation and some toxic chemicals can be found in all parts of the flower... lilies are particularly dangerous to cats and if ingested can cause kidney failure. If a negative reaction is suspected, call your Poison Control Center.

Editor's Note: This is a reprint from Jan's article in The Island Garden Magazine



MG Best Shots and Narrative!

Flowering trees in local landscapes



By Sandra Devall
MG 1998

Have you noticed that some front yards in the newer subdivisions are starting a fad? There are two Live Oak trees in these 30' x 60' front yards. These trees look fine right now. The problem will be when they become mature oaks and are 50 feet tall and 100 feet wide. There will be no room for them without causing roof, foundation or driveway damage. I have a large backyard, but after many years and many hurricanes, all of its wonderful large trees are gone. I began planting medium

size trees and now have many of the ones shown in the best shots as well as easy to care varieties of fruit trees. These will grow between 15 to 25 feet tall. They will shade, flower and fruit! Problem solved!



Crepe Myrtles • Photo courtesy of GCMG

Crape Myrtle (*Langerstroemia indica*)

The first memory I have of a crape myrtle tree came with a spanking. The neighborhood kids had decided to make bows and arrows out of the branches of Grandma Kooi's tree. Back in those days, no one trimmed the crape myrtles because no one usually trimmed trees. If only they would quit trimming them now. One reason you do not have to trim a crape myrtle is you can buy them in just about any height, from a low growing shrub to a 14-foot understory tree. They have an upright spike of flowers and come in a broad variety of colors from white to a deep bright raspberry. They make a lovely line of trees - since their trunks are tall and narrow and they will not break the front view of your home. Crape myrtles are also interesting in the winter when the bark peels and the wood is red. In the summer they are heavy bloomers and add great spots of color to your landscape.



Loquat • Photos courtesy of Dr. William Johnson

Loquat or Japanese Plum (*Eriobotrya japonica*)

Loquat gets a vote for the best pass-a-long tree. It also gets a vote as a tree that can be planted within 8 feet of the house as their spread is up rather than out. If you want them as part of a defined/formal front yard, they are easy to trim and stay in that shape. Loquat blooms in late fall to early winter and produces fruit later than our citrus. They propagate easily from seeds, some would say, too easy. You may have to pull up the starter trees in the winter or early spring. It is a wonderful tree for the birds. I have two sets of cardinals that stop by to nest and eat. The fruit is also good for humans to eat - skin and all. You will have to spit out the seeds which are very large. That is a fun thing to teach your grandchildren to do or they can help you make jelly from the fruit.



Mexican Orchid Tree • Photo courtesy of MG Tim Jahnke

Mexican Orchid Tree (*Bauhinia mexicana*)

I have never see a tree that bloomed non-stop throughout the summer as this one does. The tree fills with showy, delicate blooms that

cover at least half of the tree. The flower and the leaf share a similar shape which gives it a delicate look. Because the tree is wider than it is tall, it is like a low floating cloud. Most will grow to be up to 18 feet tall and 25 feet wide. It is a multi-trunked tree, needs partial sun and will be covered in butterflies and hummingbirds. They do not mind being crowded. Since we have few freeze days in Zone 9, they do not have to grow back every season, so they reach their full height quickly. What a pleasure!

Vitex or Lilac Chase (*Vitex agnus-castus*)

This is another tree that blooms throughout the entire summer. The name lilac was added to its common name because of the long upright blooms. Vitex prefers full sun, but is not a fussy plant and survives in the variety of soils in Galveston County, as long as it is well-drained. To get the tree to bloom more frequently, just remove the spent blooms. It can be grown to be a large shrub, but with trimming will become a perfect mid-size tree. It has a short trunk and shapes more cup-like than round which mimics the curving growth of the flowers.

Texas Mountain Laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*)

If you are patient, this somewhat slow growing native tree will be quite a prize. Mountain Laurels are multi-trunked and have a narrow 12-foot spread. It performs well in large beds and close to walkways. The grape-cluster blooms last a long time during the summer months. In the winter, this evergreen has long, beautiful seed pods and an interesting dark gray to black bark. They are great for butterfly lovers because they attract caterpillars, which can be removed by hand for light infestations. This is a very hardy tree.

Bottle Tree (*Bottelea humouroso*)

Since Pat discussed scientific names on page 4, I took the liberty of giving this tree an unofficial scientific name! “Seriously though, bottle trees are an important part of Texas landscaping humor. This tree has lots of advantages since it does not require watering, fertilizing or trimming. There is a variety of shapes and sizes and they can add a nice artistic touch to your garden. I enjoy those with multiple colors and shapes. Sunlight enhances their beauty. Their bottle history can be the start of a conversation on a lazy summer day with a large glass of ice tea, surrounded by friends.

The late fall and very early winter season is the ideal time to transplant trees in the landscape since they will have more time to become established before the heat of summer.



Vitex or Lilac Chase • Photo courtesy of GCMG



Texas Mountain Laurel • Photo courtesy of GCMG



Bottle Tree • Photo courtesy of MG Cheryl Armstrong

Trowels and Tribulations

In a suburban garden

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint from Donna's article for *La Ventana Del Lago*, The City of El Lago's neighborhood newspaper



By Donna Ward
MG 1996

I think that this is the year that I am going to change my gardening *modus operandi*. My past M.O. has always been to till the soil, rake it level, plant the seeds or transplants, drag out the hose, the sprinkler, and bend over to pull the predictable weeds. I have reached the stage where such activity is more of a chore than a fun hobby. It's container gardening for me from now on. I've purchased a few of those styrofoam 'whiskey' barrels and they'll hold enough potting soil to support a tomato plant, a cucumber,

a couple of peppers, a variety of herb plants, lettuce, radish and maybe a trio of cabbage and broccoli transplants. Just remember that container gardening is a different game than what you're accustomed to. If your usual M.O. is gardening in the back corner of the yard or behind the garage in a raised bed you've pretty much taken care of the drainage problem, but in a container, it is imperative that there is adequate drainage holes to allow excess water to escape. But be aware that when excess water escapes – it leaches out nutrients. I like to use a time-release fertilizer when I garden in containers.

If your family is still large enough that you need to crank up the John Deere tractor (maybe that's an exaggeration in our neighborhood, but you know what I mean) you may want to put a few things directly into the soil that won't lend themselves to container gardening. Corn, for instance - it needs to be planted in a 'square' as long, straight rows are not conducive to pollination. Southern peas need a fair amount of room, as do beans – both pole and bush types, so a container is not really a good option. You could put a few bush green bean plants in a container, but it would take several pickings before you harvested enough to feed two people. This month is ideal for planting either in the 'south forty' or 'whiskey' barrel.

Our last frost date has passed, so if those plants that took a hit from Jack Frost are planted in the ground you're probably safe in pruning them back. A good rule of thumb is not to remove more than

1/3 - but I've been known to be a bit more severe, and they've come back bigger and better than ever. If you keep any of your tropicals in pots, get them out of the garage and gradually introduce them to more light. Do this with all of your tender plants that have been leading a sheltered but low-light life-style all winter.

The daffodils and paperwhites are looking rather scraggly – pinch off the faded blooms so they won't go to seed. Seed production saps energy from the bulb – and don't cut off the foliage as it's storing vigor for next season. When the tulips have faded, dig the bulbs and toss them in the trash, or leave them alone - but they won't bloom again – at least not around here. Make note of any bulbs that are doing well for you this spring. You'll want more of them in your garden next year, and fall will be the time to purchase and plant them again. There is an exception to every rule and in this case the exception is the caladium. They prefer to go in the ground in spring once the soil has warmed. Easter is a pretty safe bet for their planting date.

This is the month to fertilize everything. Water – feed – and water again. Your St. Augustine has probably been mowed once or twice by now, and if not, no fertilization is recommended before a first mowing. Use a high nitrogen (1st number) 'jump-start' fertilizer for the first feeding - or a (15-5-10) is a good formulation. Fertilize the azaleas when they have finished their bloom 'show-off' period....fertilize again in 30 days and again in another 30 days. Plan ahead so that your third feeding is no later than the first week of June. Other shrubby spring bloomers also need a feeding after their blooms have

faded. Evergreen shrubbery and trees are looking for a little snack too. Remember that their feeder roots are located at the drip line. Scattering fertilizer at the trunk of a tree or shrub is a waste of time and money.

I've noticed that the song birds are returning to the bird feeder since the natural fall produced seeds are becoming scarce. Raw peanuts in the shell are a favorite of the rose-bellied woodpecker and the blue jays. In my experience the jays probably plant as many as they consume – so be forewarned, the friable, well watered and fertilized soil in your container gardens this year might also host a peanut crop!



After the fruit tree sale...

Planting for success



By Lynette Parsons
MG 2011

The 2017 Spring Plant Sale was great, you learned a lot and you bought some great stuff. However, if you are like most other gardeners, sometimes you plant and the plant either never changes in height or growth, or it dies completely. As MG Herman Auer, a confirmed fruit tree lover states, "People spend \$50 on a tree, but don't plant it right." Given the issues over the past year with drought, and the expectation that

we may see the same this year, it is a wise gardener who plants for success. Since the planting hole is the environment of the root system, if you get the hole right, the plant should thrive.

For container-grown landscape trees and shrubs, the hole should be twice as wide in diameter and no deeper than the soil ball. Do not incorporate organic matter into that hole. The latest A&M information indicates that using the same native soil will force the plant to establish new roots in the backfill. If clay is the native soil, and organic matter is used, it can also create a "bathtub" effect with water unable to move out. As a result, most of the roots will be confined to the original hole.

With bare root plants, the roots have usually been trimmed. Check for any broken roots and remove them prior to planting. Do not expose the roots to sunlight or let them dry out. If you cannot plant quickly, keep the roots moist with damp burlap or place them in moist soil.

Soil ball and container grown plants should be checked for girdling. If roots are wrapping around the ball, it is critical to trim the roots in two-to-four places around the ball. Make the cut from the top to the bottom of the ball. If girdling is not an issue, try not to break up the soil ball as you move it from the container or out of the protective covering.

The top of the soil ball goes at a slightly higher level than the surrounding soil. If soil drains poorly, set plant at 1-3 inches of the root ball above the soil level. Bring in soil to finish covering the root ball to create a slightly raised berm. Planting too deeply may cause more plant loss than any other reason. This is particularly true for plants such as yaupon holly or mountain laurel. These plants are often top heavy and are often planted deeply so they

will not fall over.

With bare root plants, once the planting hole is 2/3 full with soil around the roots, remove air pockets by filling the hole with water. If that is not practical, firm the soil by hand around the roots, but do not use excessive force which may compact the soil. Finish backfilling, and thoroughly water.

For all landscaping plants, mulching is the next step, but do not make a volcano mound. Keep mulch and soil off the plant stem. Do not add fertilizer. Do not prune landscape plants at planting time. If plants are top heavy, stake plants using traditional methods. During the first year, provide shade from intense sunlight if at all possible. Other plants may work as well as erecting screening structures. Maintain a consistent watering schedule for the first year.

Fruiting tree and bush planting procedures are slightly different. Some steps are critical to success. After having a soil test, provide the appropriate acidity and nutrients for the plants you hope to grow. Also, determine the soil internal drainage rate. Dig a three-foot-deep hole, eight inches in diameter. Fill with water. If the water drains in 24 hours, it is suitable for all fruit crops. If it takes 36 hours until fully drained, you should plant peach, apricot, plum and nectarine. If it takes forty-eight hours to drain, you may want to plant container dwarf varieties. Poorly draining sites can handle persimmon, pomegranate, citrus, jujube, pear, and pecans, but keep a careful eye till they are established.

MG Auer's Golden Rule for fruit tree and bush planting: trim the roots, and trim the top. Trim more top than root. This holds true for both bare root and ball plants. Yes, you bought an expensive plant, but cutting the top proportionally allows the roots to establish and to put out new growth when it is safe to do so. Not trimming the top delays the process of growth. You want to develop a central leader on your fruit trees anyway, and the day you plant is the day you start the pruning process. Avoid making those harder cuts later on.

Actual planting procedures are nearly identical to those above, but drainage is critical, so keep it on the high side. Pack the soil firmly. Do not leave a large depression around the tree or shrub. Fertilize only after plant growth begins.



Photo courtesy of MG Herman Auer

Spiders...gardener's biological pest control agents?



By Lisa Belcher
MG 2014

While living in England we never worried about our eight-legged friends as there are no venomous spiders living in the United Kingdom. We once had a lovely field spider over winter in our conservatory and we named her Charlotte. Moving back to America had our family weary of every spider because “you never knew which one was the one spider” which was venomous.

Recently, one early morning, while wandering in my back garden, I noticed dew-laden webbing on my grass. It was so intricate and fragile looking. Later that afternoon while getting my garden beds ready for my spring vegetables, I noticed these tawny-colored round shapes all in the same area of my grass and remembered this was in the same area where I had spotted the dewy webbing earlier in the day.



Photo courtesy of MG Lisa Belcher

I hunkered down and was amazed at what I saw...literally dozens and dozens of little spiderlings all basking together in the sun. But these baby spiders gave me pause for thought...I remembered there were two species in Texas which were venomous; the Brown Recluse and the Black Widow. “Kill it or keep it?” This was my latest query by e-mail to Dr. Johnson. Luckily, neither one of these were living in my back yard. Reassured I was safe to admire up close, I watched those tiny amazing creatures for almost forty-five minutes. Most people are leery of these eight legged arachnids, and movies, television, and even the Little Miss Muffet nursery rhyme do nothing to help quell our fear of these tiny critters. It turns out that the vast majority of spiders are not our foes, but our friends. Spiders are one of the top of the BENEFICIALS in our garden. Think of them as free pest control and they will soon ease your anxiety. Here in Texas, we have over 900 species of spiders. Spiders can be divided into three groups; those who spin a web and wait for their prey, those that are very busy and actively forage for their food, and those who are very patient and sit still and wait for dinner to come to them.

Our garden web spiders are the most common in our area and actually catch more insects than the other two mentioned. Still a little anxious about our eight legged guy? What if I told you one spider can consume up to 2,000 insects a year, from just one little spider! Their diet includes flies, grasshoppers, moths, beetles, caterpillars and thrips. Some spiders species can lay up to 3,000 eggs a year. Just think about that for a moment, if only 50% of spiderlings survive, that's 1,500 spiders to help catch, kill and consume all those pesky insects we despise!

Most spiders spin their webs on a nightly basis. The wind, debris and even prey can sometimes dismantle their webs. Spiders are great recyclers as they will consume their web as they dismantle it. Their web is an awesome home/hunting ground. It's also where mating takes place when the male spider deposits his sperm on the web and later it will be transferred to the female spider. Male spiders must be weary though, if it is not the right time for the female spider or she is caught off guard, she will become agitated and will attack and kill the male. The average life span for a spider is three years. Female spiders typically will lay their eggs in the autumn. Not all female spiders will stay with their eggs until they hatch; in fact, some die soon after they lay their eggs.

As I mentioned earlier, luckily for me, the spiderlings were neither the Brown Recluse nor the Black Widow. For us here in Galveston County, the Brown Recluse *Loxosceles reclusa* does not like our humid climate. The Brown Recluse prefers the drier areas of the Ft. Worth/Dallas area. We do however have the Southern Black Widow *Latrodectus mactans* in our area either. They prefer to live in dark, secluded areas like woodpiles and under stones. Indoors, they can be found in sheds, undisturbed corners of garages and basements. Although venomous, this spider rarely causes death.

Spiders are not only our friends, they are our free exterminators and provide truly magnificent works of art in our own back yard. Grab a cup of tea, take a stroll early one dewy morning and view their webs. You will not only be spellbound, but be thankful for these arachnids living in your garden.

Honorary Master Gardeners

The title of Honorary Galveston County Master Gardener may be granted to an individual who is not a Master Gardener in recognition of long-term and outstanding service to the County Master Gardener program. Two individuals were recognized as Honorary Galveston County Master Gardeners this spring.

Dr. David Cohen was recognized as an Honorary Galveston County Master Gardener before he presented his Growing Blueberries in the Home Garden program on Saturday, February 11, at the AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park. Dr. Cohen, a gynecologist by profession and blueberry grower by hobby, was presented the honor by Dr. Johnson in recognition of his providing educational programs since 2004 in support of our *Gulf Coast Gardening* educational series. Dr. Cohen has answered home gardeners questions on blueberries at many of our Master Gardener Spring Plants Sales. *(Pictured at right are MG Nancy Langston-Noh, MG Jackie Auer, Dr. David Cohen, MG Herman Auer, MG Denny Noh, MG Penny Bessire and Dr. William M. Johnson.)*



Jerry Hurlbert was recognized as an Honorary Galveston County Master Gardener before he presented his Growing Avocados in the Home Garden program on Saturday, February 11, at the AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park. Jerry Hurlbert grows several varieties of avocados in his home garden and was presented the honor by Ira Gervais, President of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association, in recognition of his providing educational programs since 2007 in support of our *Gulf Coast Gardening* educational series. *(Pictured at left are MG Herman Auer, Jerry Hurlbert and MG Ira Gervais.)*

Weed of the month...

Bur Clovers



By Marian Kimbrough
MG 2007

Large bur clover: *Medicago polymorpha*
Small bur clover: *Medicago minima*

A common clover-type plant that grows in this area and is quite invasive is known as bur clovers. Even though it is not a true clover, two species identified in this area are commonly known as large bur clover (*Medicago polymorpha*) and small bur clover (*Medicago minima*). Both species are dicots (broadleaf plants) in the legume family and are closely related to alfalfa. Large bur clover and small

bur clover are native to Europe but brought to the States as grazing material (fodder crop) for cattle.

Large bur clover can grow from 6 to 22 inches and has flower clusters consisting of 3 to 5 flowers, blooming in early spring. Small bur clover can grow from 6 to 18 inches long with 10 or more flowers displayed per head (inflorescence). In this region, bur clover's blooming period is from February to June but can grow year round. Germination is in the fall season when temperatures are cooler.

Bur clover can be readily identified by its small pea-like yellow flower, three green clover-shaped leaves and purple stems. It reproduces from seeds contained in "burred" seedpods, as well as spreading prostrate stolons, which allow it to tolerate close mowing, increasing its survival and spreading abilities. The exterior of burred seedpods has numerous velcro-like hooks that may become entangled in animal coats or human clothing, which serves as a common means of dispersal.

Preventive practices, such as good turf management, are best in reducing infestation. Here in the Gulf Coast area, a lawn fertilization program based

on soil tests will encourage growth of a dense, healthy turf, which will inhibit the clover from becoming established. Mechanical or physical removal is not recommended because stolons may break and sprout, increasing rather than decreasing the infestation.

Pre-emergent herbicides like those contained in "weed and feed fertilizers" may be used to prevent seed germination in the fall. Timing of the application is critical for effective control. Early October is recommended as cool fronts typically occur during this time and the seeds of cool season weeds start to germinate. While weed and feed fertilizers for lawns can be an effective tool, they can stress or kill landscape trees and shrubs if applied under or near their drip line.

Over-the-top herbicides or post-emergence herbicides like "broad-leaf weed killers" may be used in the spring. If you choose to use a post-emergence herbicide, do so when the bur clover is actively growing. Apply a broadleaf lawn herbicide containing a combination of 2,4-D and MCPP or triclopyr as its active ingredients late May or early June. More than one application may be necessary. To be most effective, the herbicide should be applied when temperatures are between 60° and 80°, no rain is forecast for 24-48 hours, and no wind is present to blow the herbicide onto desirable broadleaf plants.

For spot treatment of small, unwanted patches, you can avoid the use of a tank sprayer by mixing the herbicide according to label directions and then applying it with a disposable paint brush or a sponge tied to a stick. Glyphosate (Roundup) works well for this since the area may be reseeded seven days after application. Be aware, though, that glyphosate is non-selective—it can kill or damage the grass or other green, living plants that it touches. Be sure to read and follow the product's label instructions and precautions. When using herbicides and other pesticides, always read and follow label directions carefully.

Photos courtesy of Dr William Johnson



Bur clover can be readily identified by its small pealike yellow flower, three green clover-shaped leaves and purple stems.



The exterior of burred seedpods has numerous velcro-like hooks that may become entangled in animal coats or human clothing which aids its dispersal.

Libbie's Place - Galveston

A Senior Day Program



By Jan Fountain
MG 2013

Take a trip down to Galveston Island and you will find Libbie's Place tucked away in the shadow of Moody Methodist Church. There are two groups of Master Gardeners who volunteer there. One group assists with "The Green Thumb Club," helping them with gardening activities. The other group is the grounds crew that works around the facility to incorporate the landscaping plan.

You may ask, "How did so many Galveston County MGs get involved in a non-profit, senior day program?" When Libbie's Place was first envisioned in 1993, a need was found for a community facility to meet the needs of the disabled and elderly. With planning and a permanent endowment fund, the efforts of many provided the opening of the facility in 2001. A Dow Grant was given in 2007 to provide a landscaping program, which included raised beds and gardening tools. Alice Williams, the director, contacted Bobbie Ivey, MG 2008, asking her for help with developing the landscape. Bobbie became interested in the possibility of doing gardening outreach activities there. In 2009 she made a proposal to Dr. Johnson to add Libbie's Place as a Master Gardener project garden and it was approved.

Through Bobbie's efforts the program is starting to take shape. Bobbie says, "The senior attendees reach a time in their life when they need activities that stimulate them socially, cognitively, and physically." She also says that they need to be creative, play in the dirt, and to take care of something. With the direction of Bobbie Ivey and Dr. Pam Gilbert (MG '03), the grounds crew manager, the Libbie's Place gardens have become a project that is evolving into a lovely place with many opportunities for an exchange of ideas. Many of the participants would say, "It is a little bit of heaven on earth."



Master Gardeners Judy Anderson, Susan Clasen, Jan Fountain and Bobbie Ivey



Garden Clubs of the Bay Area Fundraisers



By Kay Corey
MG 2001

Texas Garden Clubs promote the love of gardening, floral design, horticulture, civic responsibilities, landscaping, environmental concerns and garden therapy and encourages participation and support in educational programs for both the very young and advanced students. It is the purpose of this organization to preserve, protect and conserve the natural resources of this country and to maintain and enhance the beauty of our lands.

In our efforts to support the work of our area Garden Clubs, Spring is the time for not only planting but fundraising to support the varied gardening projects of these clubs. Our focus is on three garden clubs who are busy potting plants from their gardens in Pass-a-Long plant sales. These are plants grown in Gulf Coast gardens and well adapted to grow in your garden.

DIG 'N DESIGN GARDEN CLUB

May 6, Plant and Garage Sale –
1707 W. Hedgecroft, El Lago

President Bernie Eisenbarth leads this 37-member club. She says the club will hold their annual plant sale and garage sale by joining an El Lago community garage sale at a member's home. They have been very successful selling their hard to find pass-a-long plants and nectar plants for butterflies and bees. The garage sale brings in additional funds.

This very active club meets the second Thursday, 9:30 at the El Lago City Hall. The funds from their sales help support wildlife habitats, butterfly gardens at Ed White school and the El Lago Butterfly gardens. Come early for the best selections!

GARDENERS BY THE BAY, Clear Lake

April 5, Plant Sale –
Clear Lake United Methodist Church,
16635 El Camino Real, 9:00 a.m.

This very large 97-member club meets at the Clear Lake United Methodist Church on the first Wednesday of the month, at 9:00 a.m. Currently, they are actively potting pass-a-long plants in preparation for their very large annual plant sale. Club members, some are Master Gardeners, will be on hand to answer your gardening questions.

President Mary Smith says the club funds are used to educate and support community and school gardens. Your support is needed and appreciated. Membership to the club is always open to those with a love of gardening.

HERITAGE GARDENERS, Friendswood

APRIL 29, 30, GARDEN TOUR,
Tour tickets \$12 pre-sale,
\$15 days of tour – 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Heritagegardener.org

PLANT SALE, BAZAAR, RAFFLE

112 W. Spreading Oaks, Friendswood
Garden Center opens 11:00 a.m.

Judged FLOWER SHOW, open and free to the public,
1:00 p.m., April 28 and throughout the week end.
“On the Wing” flower designs will represent the garden club members’ interpretations of birds, butterflies or bees.

Heritage Gardeners invites all to their annual Spring Garden Tour and related activities at their garden center located at 112 W. Spreading Oaks in Friendswood. This very active 52-member club lead by Lydia Abuisi raises funds to not only support the Marie Workman Garden Center but the Briscoe public gardens located around the garden center. These gardens are designated as a Texas Wildlife Habitat and are experiencing a new Butterfly habitat design in support of Friendswood's Monarch Host City designation. Heritage gives a college scholarship each year to a local high school graduate for horticultural-related studies and sponsors the Heritage Jr. Master Gardeners, youth garden club. The kids will also be present and will enter the flower show. They will man their Lemonade Stand and Craft booth.

We hope you will support the Garden Clubs of the Bay Area in their efforts to make our world more beautiful, environmentally safe and productive. They educate with programs and workshops while enjoying friends and fellowships.



easy recipes

Seasonal Bites



By Sandra Gervais
MG 2011

I love our Master Gardener potluck meetings. Where else can you visit with good friends, learn about plants and gardening, and enjoy great food? The November meeting was a good example.

When members started asking for the following two recipes, I knew we had to share them in the newsletter. These recipes have one thing in common; both makers said the dishes are very easy to prepare. Definitely my favorite kind of recipes.

These two recipes go nicely together and would make a great make-ahead meal for either family or company. And they are so easy!



Kumquat Pie

MG Wayne Elliott

½ cup Dark Syrup
½ cup honey
3 eggs
1 cup sugar
2 tablespoons butter (melted)
1 teaspoon vanilla or (Honey Bourbon)
1 – ½ cups of sliced kumquats
9-inch unbaked pie crust

Preheat oven to 350 F
Mix syrup, eggs, sugar, butter, and vanilla. Stir in kumquats.
Pour filling into pie crust.
Bake on center rack of oven for 60 to 70 minutes.
Cool for 2 hours on wire rack.

Tips: Pie is done when center reaches 200F.
Tap center surface of pie lightly – it should spring back when done.
For easy clean up, spray pie pan with cooking spray before placing pie crust in pan.
The Bourbon works real well with the Kumquats.



Blackberry Cobbler with Lemon Verbena

MG Gayle McAdoo

4–6 cups blackberries	1 cup all purpose flour
½-1 cup sugar	¾ cup sugar
½ cup butter (1 stick)	1 cup milk, whole or 2%
¼ cup sugar	¼ tsp salt
2 Tbsp lemon verbena zest of 1 lemon	2 tsp baking powder Cinnamon to taste

Mix blackberries with ½-1 cup sugar in bowl; set aside and let stand until some of sugar is dissolved and berries are juicy. Melt butter in 9X13-inch baking dish. Mince together ¼ cup sugar, lemon verbena and lemon zest in small food processor. Combine flour, remaining ¾ cup sugar, milk, salt and baking powder in large bowl; mix well. Stir in sugar-lemon verbena-lemon mixture. Pour over melted butter in prepared baking dish. Spoon blackberries over batter. (Excess liquid can be discarded or reserved to make syrup, as you like.) Sprinkle cinnamon over batter-berry mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour, until bubbly and lightly browned. Let cool about 30 minutes before serving. Serve with or without ice cream. Yum!

Yields 10 – 12 servings.

This is also delicious with a combination of peaches and blackberries.

Adapted from recipe for Lemon Verbena Peach Cobbler, by Jane E. Cook in *Along the Garden Path with Bill and Sylvia Varney*, Fredericksburg Herb Farm

Upcoming Events - March-May 2017

Galveston County Master Gardener Educational Programs for Home Gardeners

The following Master Gardener Programs are free to the public.

Location: Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park • 4102 Main Street (FM 519), La Marque, Texas 77568

GPS location: 29.359705, -95.003591

For course reservations, call 281-309-5065 or email galvcountymgs@gmail.com

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html>

MARCH

BONSAI

Saturday, March 11, 2017

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com

Galveston County Master Gardener Clyde Holt will provide a brief overview of what bonsai is and how to design a basic tree. He will facilitate a workshop and provide a tree, pot, soil, pruners, and wire. Class size will be limited to 10 participants, and pre-registration is required. There will be a charge of \$25 to cover the cost of materials; you will be able to keep your tree.

COMPOSTING

Saturday, March 11

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com

Galveston County Master Gardener Jim Gilliam will demonstrate how to build a compost pile, and then explain how to use the compost you have created. He will provide practice information about what ingredients are needed, how to assemble them, and how to know when the compost is ready to use ("done"). Compost is that magical soil amendment that is a soil conditioner, fertilizer, and the key ingredient in organic gardening.

TOMATO STRESS MANAGEMENT, Part 3

Saturday, March 18

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com

Presented by Galveston County Master Gardener Ira Gervais. Learn about various fungal and other diseases and environmental problems that could occur in your tomato garden and how to combat or resolve them.

CULTURE AND CARE OF PALMS

Saturday, March 18

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com

GC Master Gardener and palm tree enthusiast O.J. Miller has over 17 years of experience with palms in our area. This program will include an introduction to palms, an overview of the exotics, and information about the commonly found palms at nurseries in our area. Included in the presentation will be planting methods, fertilization, freeze preparation, and proper care. The program will include a discussion of the better varieties for Galveston County and the surrounding area.

TURNING DIRT INTO SOIL

Saturday, March 25

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com

GC Master Gardener Jim Gilliam will explain the difference between dirt and soil, soil structure and characteristics, pH, nutrients, sources and strategies for soil amendment, soil testing and cultural practices. He will emphasize how to improve your existing soil.

APRIL

"Grafting Pecan Trees"

Thursday, April 13, 2017

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com

NOTE LOCATION: 15102 Williams Street, Santa Fe, TX

409-925-2718 or 409-771-8425

From Hwy 6, go north on Elm Street to Williams Street, it is on the northwest corner.

Fee/Free.

Participants must pre-register: 281-309-5065

Galveston County Master Gardener event

Further details <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html>



"Beneficials in the Garden"

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com

Dr. William M. Johnson, Galveston County Extension Agent for Horticulture, presenting at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension in Carbide Park, 4102 Main, La Marque.

Fee/Free.

Participants must pre-register: Ph 281-309-5065

Galveston County Master Gardener event.

Further details <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/index.html>



MAY

TOOL TIME HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 6, 2017

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com
to pre-register

GC Master Gardeners Henry Harrison, III, and Tim Jahnke will demonstrate the use and maintenance of garden tools. There will be a talk on garden tools, followed by hands-on cleaning, sharpening, and using them. Topics covered will be: selection of quality tools, ergonomics, basic sharpening, rust prevention and removal, safety, rehab of antique tools, fluids/oils/solvents, techniques for tool use, and storage. Bring 2-3 of your garden tools to the Workshop. We will help you get your tools ready for a productive garden season and provide knowledge about keeping them in top working condition.

NOTE: Class size is limited to 30 students and will take place in the Galveston County Master Gardener Demonstration Garden in Carbide Park. Pre-registration is required. Workshop will take place rain or shine.



GALVESTON COUNTY HOME FRUIT GROWERS TOUR

Saturday, May 20, 2017

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon

e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com
to pre-register

Three fruit orchards are on the tour this year. Vegetable gardens at each site will also be open. The tour sites contain a wide variety of fruit trees, ranging from a peach orchard in Dickinson, the Galveston County Master Gardener Demonstration Orchard in La Marque, and a sizeable home orchard in Santa Fe.

Each site will be open from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon.

Visit sites in any desired order.

Orchard locations:

- 1) Galveston County Master Gardener (homeowner) at
5202 Highland Road, Santa Fe, TX 77517
- 2) Galveston County Master Gardener Demonstration Orchard and Garden,
4102 Main Street (Hwy 519), La Marque, TX 77568
- 3) Wilson and Renee Hillman's Fruits 'n Such Orchard ph. 832-443-6733
6309 Ave. U, Dickinson, TX 77539; located off Bowerman Road and FM 517.



MARCH / APRIL "THINGS TO DO"

Gardening Calendar Video

Click on the "Play Video" icon (below) to see what a "group effort" can do by the Master Gardeners to prepare an exceptional "Things to Do" Calendar.



by Jenifer Leonpacher
MG 2010



by Gregory Werth
MG 2012



Carbide Park Update



By MG Tom Fountain
MG 2008

The beginning of this year has started off HOT! So far this year our average daily temperatures have been about five degrees above normal. Several temperature records have been broken (almost a dozen record high temperatures so far), even though a January freeze brought a few cooler

than normal days. Rainfall across our area was slightly above normal, but very spotty. The outlook for our spring season indicates that temperatures are likely to continue above normal, and rainfall is expected to be near normal.

With a very successful spring plant sale in our rear view mirrors, our gardeners are looking forward to spring and are starting to prepare and plant the spring-summer gardens. The greenhouse crew is still busy as ever taking care of the plants left from our plant sale until they find another home in one of the spring or summer beds. Pictured is Lisa (Fig. 5) smiling after she checked on new bedding plants.

Lately, Master Gardeners have been very busy since we had the big plant sale. Some of the projects included repairing and storing of the plant sale equipment, and doing garden-style spring cleaning before starting our spring gardens. If that was not enough to stay busy, we provided tours and grafting workshops for the public. John Johns provided a presentation on pruning roses to the 2017 MG Interns and general public (Fig. 1). Kenneth and Robert installed lattices on the grilling shed (Fig. 3) and Linda S. has just finished cleaning a bed for spring planting (Fig. 7).

We will continue to be very busy in the garden for quite a while. We have the spring and summer gardening projects and we will host for the Texas Master Gardeners Conference which will include a garden tour in May. On top of all of this, we have several construction projects slated to be starting up this year. The projects include an aquaponics unit (see page 23), and an environmentally friendly restroom facility.

We work hard, but we also have a lot of fun and always learn something new. Robin, Denny, Nancy, Barbara and Dian are discussing a garden project (Fig. 6). Barbra and Ed prepared lunch (Fig. 2). Finally, we have Ed, Bobbie, Jim and Wes taking a break (Fig. 4).



Photos courtesy of Tom Fountain

Carbide Park *cont'd*

Aquaponics Update





Gulf Coast Gardening

**Galveston County
Master Gardeners**

Join Us in Galveston!

List of Tours

The **Annual TMGA Awards Luncheon** will be held at **12:30pm on Monday, May 1st, 2017** at the Moody Gardens Hotel in Galveston after the disembarkation of the cruise ship.

We welcome everyone to join us for a superb luncheon prepared by the renowned chefs at Moody Gardens.

- Galveston Tours
- Vendors
- Commemorative T-Shirts
- Discounts to area attractions and merchants

This event is brought to you by the Galveston County Master Gardener Association.

- Galveston Master Gardener Demo Gardens
- Moody Gardens Attractions
- East End Tree Sculpture Tour
- Historic Mansions
- 1894 Opera House
- Broadway Cemetery Historic District
- Shopping the Strand
- Moody Golf Course
- Saltwater Fishing Experience

For more information, please visit the Galveston Connection link on the conference [website](#).

Looking forward to seeing you there!

The Galveston County Master Gardeners
and the
Texas Master Gardener Association

Reserve Your Spot Today!

Moody Gardens Hotel
1 Hope Boulevard
Galveston, TX





bulletin board



Volunteer Opportunities

- For the **MG Phone Desk** contact Ginger Benson by
- e-mail at galvcountymgs@gmail.com or call the office at 281.309.5065.

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Tideway is a program of the Transitional Learning Center**
- Dr. Johnson has approved Tideway Transitional Learning Center (644 Central City Blvd., Galveston, Texas 77551) as a location where Master Gardener service hours may be earned. Plans to prepare the gardens at Tideway for spring planting are ready and volunteers are needed.
- Volunteers can contact Brack Collier at bcollier@tlc-galveston.org.
- The focus is on the long-term needs of individuals with an acquired brain injury. The program offers accessible horticultural experiences, through which individuals with a brain injury can improve sensory awareness, motor skills, range of motion, endurance and flexibility as well as regain confidence, and learn new skills. This provides the opportunity for our residents to develop the necessary skills to gain and maintain a productive lifestyle whether it is on site or volunteering in the community. The residents at Tideway are very much "hands on" in building the different garden beds, in fact some of the residents came up with the designs. **And they have chickens!**



Volunteer Opportunities

- **Libbie's Place Adult Day Care** has been designated as a Demonstration Garden for the Master Gardener Association. It is located at 5402 Avenue U in Galveston and is part of Moody Methodist Church outreach ministries www.moody.org/libbies-place-senior-day-program. A crew is needed to maintain and upgrade the garden as needed with your time spent counting towards MG volunteer hours. MG Pam Windus is heading up the crew and will determine the day, time and frequency of the work days. If you are interested, or have any questions, please contact Pam at 409.771.5620, email DrPGilbert@aol.com to let her know the day/times (AM/PM) that would work best for you. Thank you for your time and consideration in this great new endeavor for the Master Gardeners.

SPECIALIST AND OTHER MG RELATED TRAINING

Please see the Texas Master Gardeners Website for details. By visiting the website you can find up-to-date information on Specialist Programs that were added in between editions of the newsletter. txmg.org. You may download the application forms from that website. **Note** all applications for the Specialist Training courses must be approved and signed by Dr. William M. Johnson. **Note** fees do not include lodging or food unless specified otherwise.

The Galveston Connection

Make plans to join us in Galveston after disembarkation for our Annual Awards Luncheon featuring a Smokehouse Buffet and our Search for Excellence winners. After the luncheon, the Galveston Master Gardeners have procured a variety of delightful Island Tours. Register for all events today on the conference website!



Check out the Lodging page for special conference pricing at the beautiful Moody Gardens Hotel.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Tour Guides for "First-Thursday-in-a-Month" Public Access and Tour of our Demonstration Garden Long-winded title but it says what we will be doing. Our Demonstration Garden will be open for touring by the general public on the first Thursday of each month from 9:00 -11:00 am. MGs are needed to serve as tour guides for our demonstration Garden. Contact MG Robert Marshall 281.993.5595, email rbrtm01@att.net or MG Bobbie Ivey 713.748.8564, email blivey@sbcglobal.net to volunteer.

Volunteers are needed to help with the Saturday programs and the Tuesday evening programs. If you can help please contact Herman Auer 409.655.5362, e-mail hermanauer@comcast.net

AgriLife Extension Office Demonstration Garden needs volunteers!

The gardens around the AgriLife Extension Office are maintained by Master Gardeners under the team leadership of MG Giger Benson. This is an opportunity to make a good impression on the many visitors to the AgriLife Extension Office. Come out and have a good time while learning more about ornamentals.

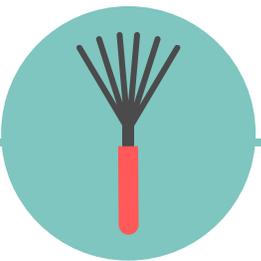
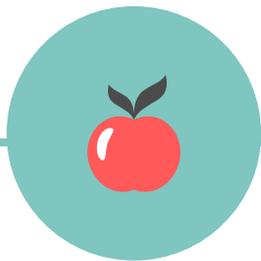
Please contact Ginger at 281-309-5065, email galvcountymgs@gmail.com to find out the schedule and join her team.



Don't forget to put the link for our weather station on your smart phone and computer: www.weatherlink.com/user/gcmga



Here is a great way to support our GCMGA Amazon will donate 0.5% of our personal purchases to Galveston County Master Gardener Association. All you have to do is: Go to smile.amazon.com - Choose Galveston County Master Gardener Association as your charity. Save smile.amazon.com to your favorites. - Always start from this site to do your amazon shopping. - You should see your chosen charity in the top bar on amazon's website. - If you have any problems, search smile on amazon's website



REMEMBER

In order to maintain your status as a certified Texas Master Gardener, each year you must complete a minimum of 6 hours continuing education, as well as 12 service hours. Additionally, those hours must be reported through the online Volunteer Management System or other approved means. Contact MG Wayne Elliott at gcmghours@gmail.com for more information.

Date	Name of Program	Speaker	CEUs for MGs
1/5/2017	Collection of Dormant Graftwood	Herman Auer & Sue Jeffco	1.25
1/5/2017	Vegetable of the Week: Broccoli & Cauliflower	Barbara Lyons	0.50
1/7/2017	Wedge Grafting	Sue Jeffco	2.50
1/7/2017	Propagation of Plants by Cuttings	Bill Cummins	1.00
1/11/2017	Highlights of Soil Solarization Study	Gene Speller	0.25
1/14/2017	Growing Great Tomatoes (Part 2)	Ira Gervais	2.00
1/14/2017	Successful Spring Vegetable Gardening	Herman Auer	2.50
1/17/2017	Gardening by the Square Foot	John Jons	1.50
1/19/2017	Fig Tree Pruning & Propagation	Terry Cuclis	0.50
1/28/2017	Growing peaches in Galveston County	Herman Auer	3.00
1/28/2017	Kitchen Gardening	Mary Demeny	2.50
1/31/2017	Anyone Can Grow Roses	John Jons	1.50
2/4/2017	Growing Backyard Citrus	Robert Marshall	3.00
2/4/2017	Growing Blueberries	Dr. David Cohen	1.25
2/10/2017	Spring Plant Sale Pre-Sale Preview	John Jons	1.00
2/11/2017	Growing Avocado & Papaya	Jerry Hurlbert	2.00
2/11/2017	Soil Health & Evaluation	Jim Gilliam	2.00
2/23/2017	Rose Pruning	John Jons	1.25
2017 Recertification Hours for MGs		Total CEUs (Hours)	29.50

Last Updated: February 28, 2017



the last word...

When life gives you lemons

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint from

By Angela Wilson, *The Daily News*, Community Affairs Editor

Dr. William M. Johnson grew up on his family farm and always had a love for horticulture for as long as he could remember.

That adoration for all things associated with cultivating and growing your own food, as well as tending to gardens and more, has led to a successful — and long — career as Galveston County's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent for horticulture.

Johnson, who started his career in 1989 with the Galveston County Office, was awarded the agency's 2016 Superior Service Award for Distinguished Career by his peers. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is part of the Texas A&M University System.

"Growing up, I didn't know it as horticulture at the time," Johnson said. "I called it chores, such as fertilizing, weeding and harvesting, but I also got to eat the fruits of my labors."

Dr. Douglas Steele, Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, presented the Distinguished Career award to Dr. Johnson during a ceremony on Jan. 10 on the Texas A&M University campus in College Station.

The Superior Service Award, which is the highest honor given by the agency, is given to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service personnel who demonstrate outstanding performance and who provide exceptional service. Individuals eligible for the distinguished career award must have been with the agency a minimum of 20 years.

"I was honored that my A&M colleagues thought well of my work," Johnson said. "I also felt humbled about the many individuals, including Galveston County Master Gardener volunteers and my co-workers, who shared my vision and helped to make it a reality. They share in this recognition as well."

Ira Gervais, president of the Galveston County Master Gardener Association, has known Johnson since February 2011 when he joined the Galveston County Master Gardeners.

A retired senior executive in the oil field, Gervais was intrigued with how deeply involved Johnson was in all aspects of what the Galveston County Master Gardener Association does, as well as how involved he is with the public education program, which can be up to 100 programs a year.

"The Distinguished Service Award from Texas A&M is something to be very proud of as it's not given very often from Texas A&M," Gervais said. "I've known Dr. Johnson now for seven years and he continues to amaze me

with his knowledge and work ethic. To have done this job for as long as he has and to be so passionate about educating the public and to have done so many wonderful things for the people of Galveston County, it is an award that is well deserved."

Dr. Larry A. Stein, who is an Associate Department Head and Program Leader for Extension Horticulture in the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Uvalde, has known Dr. Johnson for over 20 years.

In his role, he doesn't supervise Dr. Johnson, but is responsible for the horticulture material that extension promotes. Each year Stein holds a professional development and training meeting for all the AgriLife Extension horticulturists across the state.

"He cares about what he does and the people he works for and those who work for him," Stein said.

"He has a gentle, but very caring attitude about helping people to help themselves. I'm very, very happy for Dr. Johnson. He is one of a kind and he lives and breathes Extension and it is only fitting that he receives this distinguished award. We are hoping for many more years of service from this great individual."

Throughout Johnson's 28-year career, he's learned that with planning, one can easily garden 12 months out of the year here on the Upper Gulf Coast and that you can harvest something fresh from the garden every month of the year if you plan well.

One of Johnson's most memorable undertakings over his career was being involved in the recovery of landscapes damaged by Hurricane Ike in 2008.

Johnson distinctly remembers the number 42, which is the number of Galveston County Master Gardener volunteers involved in taking street surveys on Galveston Island to ascertain the number of trees lost to Hurricane Ike. With that effort, it helped immensely in recovering federal dollars from FEMA in cleaning up.

"I've learned firsthand the remarkable resiliency of community residents when faced with a horrific disaster such as Hurricane Ike," Johnson said. "I fully appreciate the value of receiving this award and I hope to continue to learn something new each day. I want to visit more national parks; I want to do one sky diving adventure out of a perfectly good plane in addition to a few other bucket list items. I know when it's all said and done, I will be volunteering somewhere after retirement; but right now, I'm just getting started."

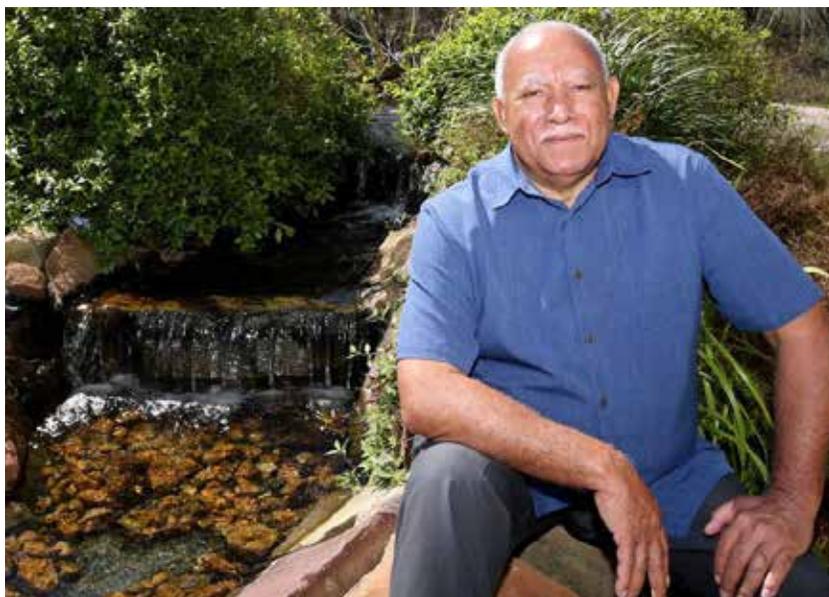


Photo courtesy of Dr. William Johnson

2017 MGA Monthly Meetings



By Judy Anderson
MG 2012



April 11, 2017 **6:30pm**

Backyard Pot Luck
Home of Rod and Lynce' Mize

May 9, 2017 **6:30pm**

Backyard Pot Luck
Home of Barbara and Gary Hankins

June 13, 2017 **6:30pm**

Graduation and Recognition
Home of Mikey Isbell

July 11, 2017 **6:30pm**

Tinsley Guinnshaver,
Urban Gardening
Pot Luck
Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

August 8, 2017 **TBA**

Moody Gardens

September 12, 2017

Backyard Pot Luck
Home of Gail and Armin Cantini

October 10, 2017

Plant Sale Preview
Extension Office

November 14, 2017

MG Annual Meeting
Extension Office
Carbide Park - La Marque

December 12, 2017

Christmas Party
Home of Mikey Isbell

MG Judy Anderson thanks MGs for hosting
backyard meetings.

You may contact Judy at
jande10198@aol.com
for information.

MASTER GARDENER GRADUATION



FEEDBACK

We Want Your
Feedback

We would love to hear
from you. Send us your
comments or suggestions for
future articles, or just let us
know how you are using our
newsletter. To make sending
feedback easy, just
click on the button
with your response

